to undertake higher studies. All universities, engineering colleges and other institutions of higher learning in the country are being networked for a supplementary programme of Distance Education for improving the quality of education including IT education. IITs, IIMs and other institutions have been asked to promote IT related programmes and launch speciffic courses in association with software industry.

The Ministry of Information Technology has, through a Pilot Project called IMPACT, followed by another project called Sustainability Support Scheme, in selected 14 engineering colleges upgraded the quality of education and training in the press of electronics and computers, including software training and education. Continuing Education Programmes (CEP) were also conducted, each year, by the faculty in these colleges. Infrastructural facilities were also enhanced in the project institutes by providing equipment.

Primary Health Centres

*673. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in the country and the number of those actually functioning;

(b) the number of PHCs set up in the country during the last five years;

(c) the average cost per PHC in the country; and

(d) the average number of persons benefited per PHC?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI N.T. SHANMUGAM): (a) The number of Primary Health Centres functioning in the country as on 31.12.98 is 23179.

(b) During the last five years, 1280 Primary Health Centres have been set-up in the country.

(c) In setting-up of a Primary Health Centre Rs. 24.50 lakh as Capital Cost (one time expenditure) and Rs. 13 lakhs recurring/cost per annum is required.

(d) On an average, 30771 persons are benefited by a PHC.

Malnutrition among Children

*674. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item, captioned "India accounts for 40 p.c. malnourished kids", published in the 'Hindu' dated 21st April, 2000;

(b) if so, whether the reasons for this poor rate of child nutrition have been identified; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The nutritional status of children is an outcome of complex and inter-related set of factors.

It follows a cycle, which begins with low birth weight of an infant caused by the malnourishment of the mother. Thereafter, delayed and inadequate complementary feeding of the malnourished infant results in further aggravation of malnutrition. Poor child caring practices because of female illiteracy and ignorance about nutrition and health worsen the situation. Further, gender discrimination against the girl child in terms of nutrition and health care leads of a malnourished adolescent girl who is married early. When the girl is still a child, she has to bear the burden of motherhood resulting in birth of malnourished infants. This perpetuates an inter-generational cycle of malnutrition.

The socio-economic factors which adversely affect the nutritional situation of children are illiteracy, particularly of women, food insecurity at household level, poor status of women, poor access to health care, safe drinking water and sanitation, and high rate of population growth.

These reasons of child malnutrition are well established through several studies.

As stated above, the problem of malnutrition is a multi-sectoral one and is being addressed by the concerned departments/ministries of the Government.

The Department of Women and Child Development runs the ICDS scheme which covers around 75% of the development blocks and urban slums in the country at present. Under this scheme, a nutrition supplement is provided to children up to the age of six years who attend the Anganwadi Centres,

pregnant women and lactating women, and in some development blocks, adolescent girls. The nutrition supplement under the scheme is provided by the State Governments and in some areas by the CARE and WFP.

Under the mandate of the National Nutrition Policy, it is proposed to have a National Nutrition Mission for addressing the whole issue of malnutrition in a more comprehensive, inter-generational manner.

Afforestation in Jharkhand

†*675. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) how much forest or barren land was acquired during last ten years in Jharkhand areas for mining coal and other minerals and for Central projects, year-wise and district-wise;

(b) the year-wise and district-wise details of compensatory afforestation carried out in lieu of the forest and barren land acquired during the said period; and

(c) the measures being taken to ensure progress of afforestation work in Jharkhand area?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Details of total area diverted under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, for mining of coal and other minerals and for Central Government projects in Jharkhand, Bihar from 1.4.1999 to 31.3.2000 are given in Statement-I. (*See* below)

(b) The State Government of Bihar has raised only 12.15 ha. as compensatory afforestation during the corresponding period of 10 year. The details of compensatory afforestation are given in Statement-II. (*See* below)

(c) Compensatory Afforestation under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 as per the terms and conditions of clearances is to be undertaken by State Government. The progress is far from satisfactory. However, the State Government has carried out afforestation over 4539 ha. during the 9th Plan period under Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.